

## Re: Our Father/To:

His heart just stopped. What is prayer? I carry on my normal life as if the perfection of every task will somehow make him well. This writing needs an address. I catch myself staring at the leaves the way my weeks-old daughter stared from my arms in the garden, fixedly and without the practice of expression. I argued my way through University with the idea that faith was the ability to believe, a human power alone. Nothing I can do can do anything, yet I stay by the phone, by the page within the shining machine looking for words to bring him back as if persuasion were possible: in prayer in the Ivory Coast I witnessed the sacrifice of a goat, its blood poured over an altar together with other offerings, the blood and fat and a good bottle of scotch mixing in our nostrils to let the dead sleep though the living excavated their corridors. The dead slept and the living went about their work raising and lowering their arms at will. How things are connected is beyond us, even the most familiar. I ask the air to conduct like flesh, whatever keeps my heart beating to reach him. I ask the doctors to be prayerful in their duties, how much nothing I can do find the perfect words to make him well.

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